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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Office of Technical Assistance

EXECUTIVE OFFICE of ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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An Introduction To OTA and TUR

The Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance for Toxics Use Reduction (OTA) is a *nonregulatory* state agency that provides *confidential* technical assistance to help companies identify opportunities to reduce the use of toxic materials or the generation of toxic byproducts. Created by the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) of 1989, OTA's mission is to help companies of all sizes and product lines find ways to reduce the use of toxics or the generation of hazardous waste as a means of protecting the environment and complying with environmental laws, while remaining economically competitive. Since 1990, OTA's staff of engineers and scientists have made more than 1,000 on-site assistance visits to companies across the Commonwealth.

What is Toxics Use Reduction? Toxics use reduction (TUR) refers to activities that increase the efficiency of the use of toxic materials at the front end or source of an industrial process. The majority of companies that adopt TUR strategies find that as a result, they lighten their regulatory compliance burden and save money as well. Standard TUR practices include:

- *Input substitution:* Replacing a toxic or hazardous substance or raw material used in production operations with a nontoxic or less toxic material
- *Product reformulation:* Changing an end product to make it nontoxic or less toxic upon use, release or disposal
- *Process redesign or modification:* Developing and using production processes of a different design than those currently used
- *Process modernization:* Upgrading or replacing existing production process equipment and methods
- *Improved operation and maintenance of equipment and methods:* Implementing "good housekeeping" practices, regular equipment inspections and adjustments, process and product inspections, etc.
- *Recycling, reuse or extended use of toxic materials:* Installing filter systems or closed-loop systems to reclaim or reuse materials, etc.

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How can OTA help my company with TUR? OTA's staff includes five teams of engineers and scientists, most of whom have previously worked in private industry, who will visit your company, walk through your processes with you, and recommend possible strategies for achieving efficient use of toxic materials. OTA sponsors public workshops -- both industry specific and general -- on TUR, and staff members are available for telephone assistance. OTA also can help you with financial analyses to determine ways in which TUR makes the most economic sense for your firm. In addition, OTA staff can answer questions about compliance with state or federal environmental regulations. *Remember, all of OTA's services are confidential and free of charge.*

How does a company arrange for OTA assistance? For your convenience, we provide a variety of ways to contact us. Just pick up the phone and call our office in Boston at 617-727-3260, or fax your request to 617-727-3827. We are also available through e-mail: *wmcgowan_EOEA@state.ma.us*. If you have a computer and a modem, you can post a confidential request for assistance on the OTA electronic bulletin board by dialing 617-727-5621 or visit our Internet Web Site *http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/ota* to learn more about our services and staff. If you prefer, you can write to us at: Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Office of Technical Assistance, 100 Cambridge Street, Room 2109, Boston, MA 02202.

OTA can help you:

- Review your materials use: what's used, where does it go?
- Identify which materials are toxic and quantify their use in relation to production
- Assess costs of toxics use and identify the sources of other environmental costs
- Identify environmental compliance issues
- Prevent wastewater contamination, avoid air emissions, and reduce or eliminate hazardous waste generation
- Increase worker safety
- Brainstorm operational changes to avoid waste generation, and thus improve efficiency, productivity, environmental performance
- Learn about new equipment and technologies, and identify alternative materials
- Learn from other companies willing to share information
- Form a team to investigate money-saving TUR opportunities
- Establish pilots, trials, test runs of TUR strategies and technologies
- Position your company for green markets